

4. Alternative Schools

- a. *Cooperative Alternative Program (CAP):*** This program aimed at demonstrating the willingness of seven school districts to create a unique governance and fiscal structure to respond to the needs of students at risk. The CAP High School offered an alternative for at-risk students in seven cooperating districts in rural Texas. Its primary purpose was to provide remediation in basic skills and job-specific vocational training. It featured small classes, individualized instruction, individual and group counseling, and a student assistance program of tutorials. Many of the 14 to 22 year old students included in the evaluation were designated as at risk on almost every dimension, including over-age for grade, high truancy or suspension rates, below grade level on basic courses, substance abuse, and pregnancy. Students stayed an average of 30 weeks and received all-day, every-day services during that time. Data reported indicate that CAP students significantly outperformed comparison students academically, improved attendance, and increased self-esteem.

For more information, see:

Rossi, R. J. *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report, Vol. 1: Findings and recommendations.* American Institutes for Research, P. O. Box 1113, Palo Alto, CA 94302.

- b. *Lane School Program:*** This is an alternative program for students with emotional and behavioral problems who require intensive, targeted intervention programs and consultation. It has two major components: a teacher consultation program and a self-contained day-school. The consultation program provides school districts with access to services of highly qualified behavioral consultants who help teachers and staff with creative problem solving and implementation of classroom interventions. The four-classroom day school serves between 36-42 adolescents who have long-standing behavior problems. Students participate in a level system, token economy and a schedule of core courses that include academics as well as social skills. Typical outcomes reported for students completing the program include: increase in school attendance; greater attainment of behavioral and academic goals; decrease in office referrals; lowered suspension rate. More than 90% of the students who complete the program are reported as being successful during their first year of transition back to their neighborhood schools; of these ,74% continue are reported as being successful 12 months after leaving Lane School.

For more information, see:

George, M.P., Valore, T., Quinn, M.M., & Varisco, R. (1997). Preparing to go home: A collaborative approach to transition. *Preventing School Failure, 41*, 168-172.

Quinn, M. M., Osher, D., Hoffman, C. C., & Hanley, T. V. (1998). *Safe, drug-free, and effective schools for ALL students: What works!* Washington, DC: Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American Institutes for Research.

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- c. *The Jackson School:*** This is a community-based, temporary placement behavior-modification alternative school serving 6th through 8th grades (ages 10-15 years). It is designed to serve students whose disruptive behavior problems preventing them from functioning successfully in a regular classroom. The student is viewed as part of a larger socio-economic system, with the intent of helping the student learn to negotiate with the complex dynamics of their world. A large state-wide evaluation of alternative schools consisted of site visits, school tours, classroom observations, and interviews designed to gather data from teachers, students, administrators, counselors, parents, and community members. Student and teacher perspectives of effectiveness indicate that the the Jackson School provided small classes; maintained students' individual attention, and supported families in times of crisis (whereas the comparison alternative schools did not).

For more information, see:

Bauman, A. (1998). Finding experts in unexpected places: Learning from those who have failed. *High School Journal, 81*, 258-267.